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TO
BAPTIST PRINCIPLES
AND
PRACTICES.

BY REV. J. L. BURROWS, D.D.



PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
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*See
answering*
BY REV. J. L. BURROWS, D.D. 1814-1893.



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POPULAR OBJECTIONS

TO

BAPTIST PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES.

ALLOW me to say at the outset, that I do not intend to assail or denounce Christians of any name or sect. What I have to say will be simply explanatory and defensive. I purpose only a vindication of Baptists against censures which I think unfair and unjust.

All Christians of catholic and generous spirit will, I am sure, rejoice if I shall be able to show that, as churches of Christ, we are not unworthy the confidence and love of those who, though differing from us in some points, yet hold with us the same essential evangelical Christianity,

and believe in one common Redeemer. If any have received unfavorable impressions concerning our doctrines or spirit, we trust it will be a satisfaction and pleasure to them to have such disagreeable impressions removed. To a pious heart it must be grateful to correct a misjudgment, and to discover reasons for regarding kindly any persons against whom wrongful prepossessions have been inadvertently entertained. Confidence is pleasanter than distrust. To love is sweeter than to hate.

I most heartily endorse in their entire tone and spirit the catholic utterances of Dr. Carson, found in the preface of his book on Baptism. He says: "Nothing can be farther from [my] intention than to widen the breach between churches of different denominations, or to minister to the increase of a sectarian spirit. There are two extremes which I wish to avoid—on the one hand, a spirit of liberalism that supposes the Christian his own master, and hesitates not to sacrifice the commandments of God to the courtesies of religious intercourse; on the other,

that sort of dogmatism that finds all excellence in its own party, and is reluctant to acknowledge the people of the Lord in any denomination but its own. Liberality of sentiment is not a phrase which I admit into my religious vocabulary; for though I love and acknowledge all who love the Lord Jesus, I hold myself as much under the law of God in embracing all the children of God, as in forming the articles of my creed. My recognition of all Christians I found upon the authority of Jesus. To set at nought the weakest of Christ's little ones, I call, not illiberal—but unchristian. To disown those whom Christ acknowledges, is anti-christian disobedience to Christ."

Wherever I perceive the image of Jesus reflected from the life and spirit of any professed disciple, though all his views of truth may not be clear, or not in chime with mine—though on some points he may be weak in the faith—still I will receive him, not to doubtful disputation, but as a brother beloved in the Lord.

It were better for me to have a millstone

hanged about my neck, and to be plunged with it into the midst of the sea, than wilfully to offend one of Christ's little ones. I would not, from lack of charity, "become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

A broad generalization will include most of the popular objections made against Baptists in this one—they are a **BIGOTED, ILLIBERAL, EXCLUSIVE SECT.**

If any one should ask for proof that such an impression does prevail as a popular objection, it would not be difficult to furnish it. It has not needed much reading or listening to collate a catalogue of such sweet and brotherly adjectives and phrases as these: "Intolerant—narrow—prejudiced—uncharitable—dogmatical—biased—warped and twisted—tenacious of trifles—blinded by a single idea—tied to a hobby—obstinate in maintaining one-sided views—assuming—clannish—shallow and obtuse—wrong headed—notional—crotchety—self opinionated—incapable of discovering any good outside their own communion—bigots for insisting that only one mode

of baptism is known to the Scriptures—cruelly excluding little children from their church—rudely and offensively aggressive—displaying all the assumption, all the exclusiveness of the Puseyite faction, without its learning or good breeding.”

Have you not heard or read loving epithets and pet phrases of this sort, mercilessly flung at the Baptists, from pulpit and rostrum, from the professor’s chair and the editor’s sanctum, in sermons, tracts, pamphlets, handbills, books, newspaper paragraphs and leaders, in conversations and controversies in the street and field and shop and parlor?

I do not over-color this picture. Taunts sneers, sarcasms, have been reiterated and rung through all possible changes, until a sort of general public sentiment prevails, that if one is a Baptist, he must be almost necessarily illiberal, exclusive, dogmatical, and clannish. Surely if we are not liberalized, no blame can attach to our more catholic and charitable brethren for failing to tell us our faults.

Now I have no defence or apology to offer for

the illiberality and exclusiveness of the Baptists. I simply and solemnly deny the allegation altogether. I join issue upon the facts in the case. In the name of the denomination I plead not guilty to the charge. I challenge the production of any proofs to sustain it.

In broad views of Christian obligation and duty; in generous sympathies with all that is true and good; in far-reaching charities; in large plans and methods of evangelical work; in promptness and cheerfulness of co-operation in all forms of benevolence, with all who love man and love God, Baptist communities have no cause to dread comparison with any religious societies that do now exist, or ever have existed on this globe. Their catholicity and charity are cramped within no narrower limits than the broad boundaries of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I do not assert that individual Baptists may not be found who are bigoted, narrow, and intolerant. All churches unfortunately have such members. Men of extreme and narrow

notions may be found in every sect and society—men who cannot comprehend that there may be two sides to any question, whose mental optics are quite filled by any single angle that juts into the field of vision. There are minds incapable of taking broad and comprehensive views—short-sighted minds, we may say. They see one thing and are sure of that, but they cannot discern its relations to other things. They see one side of a shield, and it is brass. They cannot conceive that it may be silver on the other side. Two such, disputing from opposite sides, will contend even to fighting—the one that the shield is all brass, the other that it is all silver. Could they only change positions for a moment, they would discover that both were partly right, and yet both wholly wrong.

No society in its principles and spirit as a whole, is to be judged by the notions and crotchets of extremists—by the shallow conceptions of sciolists or pedants—by the partial and prejudiced vagaries of enthusiasts, who think

weakly and feel strongly. No fair judgment can be formed by the study of such representatives. If only such communities as are happily free from all adherents of this character are permitted to cast stones at us, we shall not be stoned to death, shortly.

“The Baptists are a clannish, selfish, exclusive, intolerant sect!”

This, with variations, is virtually the one objection urged against us.

A charge so wide in its scope, so general in its application, so indefinite in its character, requires a wide and general answer.

I. My first answer is: THAT BAPTISTS FOR MORE THAN THREE HUNDRED YEARS HAVE BEEN THE ADVOCATES OF UNIVERSAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

The history of the doctrine of religious freedom is very interesting and instructive. Three hundred years ago, it was not recognized by any civil government, nor by any organized church in the world. The Roman Catholic Church has never yet admitted the idea by any

deliverance in creed, confession, canon, or decree. The doctrine that the conscience is free, not to be regulated or forced by human legislation, has always been denounced as a blasphemous heresy by the authorities of the Papal Church.

The Reformers all held similar views. They adopted the theory and brought it into universal and oppressive practice, that the state ought to legislate for the church, and prescribe by statute the religious creed and ceremonial for the people. The Greek, Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregational, Episcopalian, and every other church organized previous to the eighteenth century, were organized and governed with this as a recognized and enforced principle, that state governments ought to support and regulate the church, and enact and exact penalties against all who disbelieved the state creed or neglected the state ritual. This was the universal teaching of statesmen and clergy. It is to this day, though with somewhat modified phases, in every country on the globe but this.

But some three hundred years ago, a new, a

revolutionary idea, struggled up into utterance, and was cast out into the current of the world's thought. A few men timorously whispered, "Conscience should be free. Men will love each other better, if each is permitted to worship God in his own way. Let every man be subject to civil government in all civil matters, but let every one choose his own faith and forms of worship."

The idea found no welcome from princes or clergy. Religious liberty was hooted as a monstrosity, scoffed at as an absurdity, denounced as a dangerous fanaticism, and those who whispered the word were imprisoned, tortured, strangled, and burned. Yet it was a generous, liberal, benevolent, God-inspired idea. The people who originated and pleaded for this doctrine deserve well of the world. It was the expression of a charity—a wide-reaching liberality—a boundless love for humanity—an extension of equal immunities to all mankind—which no other single doctrine could convey.

Now who were the people who announced, de-

fended, pleaded for, the spiritual rights and liberties of all men everywhere? Why, these same narrow, exclusive, illiberal Baptists! The earnest pleadings for universal charity issued from the lips and hearts of Baptists. When Rome, in her terrible domination, was crushing every man and every sect, that dared even to question her authority or the divinity of her absurdest doctrines, these men sent wailing protests against this barbarous intolerance from dungeons and scaffolds. When dying from torture, they begged that the freedom wherewith Christ maketh free might be granted to all men; that all obedient citizens, though Turks or Jews or Pagans, might enjoy liberty of faith and worship.

When the morning of the Reformation dawned, and its stoutest and purest champions transferred to their own creed the article that recognized the right and duty of civil government to coerce conscience and punish dissenters from the newly-established religion, still these Baptists were pleaders for the spiritual rights of

all men. Luther scouted their doctrines, and in so doing checked the Reformation in mid-career. Had Baptists then been listened to, the Reformation would have swept all Europe. Its own intolerance arrested its progress and broke down its influence. All the leading Reformers repudiated these teachings of Christian love. Zwingli, Melancthon, and Calvin, on the continent; Cranmer, Latimer, and Knox, in England, all refused fellowship to any who differed with them about a syllable in the creed, or the version of a Psalm, or the fashion of a surplice, or the shape of a cap. Such differences provoked denunciation, and the denounced were persecuted and punished wherever bigotry could control legislation. Freedom of conscience—that fundamental, underlying principle of forbearance and fellowship and brotherly love—was not accepted nor comprehended by any of the leaders of the Reformed churches. It found expression and defence nowhere on this earth but in those persecuted, scattered communities—Baptist churches.

On this whole subject, Baptists can exhibit a glorious record. In continuous series, their catholic pleas for universal charity and liberty for all men have been traced, year by year, from 1520, when Luther was yet struggling to free his soul from the trammels of Romanism ; before Zwingle had renounced allegiance to the Pope ; before Calvin had laid the foundation of Presbyterianism ; long before Henry VIII. and Cranmer had planted the seeds of Episcopalianism—from 1520 in Germany, to 1784 in Virginia, there is no link wanting in their chain of testimonies, there is no contradictory utterance in all their deliverances.

The first published confession of faith in all the ages, asserting the right of all men to religious liberty, was published by a convention of Baptists, in England, in 1611. The earliest and, for generations, the only writers claiming and defending spiritual freedom were Baptists.

These doctrines of the Baptists have liberalized all the sects. They have infused a sweeter Christian charity into the creeds and spirit of all the

churches. Not what Luther and Zwingli taught on this subject, but what Hubmeyer and Felix Mantz, those martyred Baptists of the sixteenth century, taught, is now received by Lutherans as the truth of God. Not the narrow notions of Calvin and Knox, but the generous sentiments of Busher and Helwys are now adopted by the Presbyterians. Not the exclusive and bigoted vagaries of Cranmer and Latimer, but the catholic creed of Henry Hart and Humphrey Middleton—burned at Canterbury, in 1555—are now the standards of Episcopalianism, at least in this country. Congregationalism in New England has been liberalized, by repudiating John Cotton's bloody tenets, and accepting Roger Williams' conclusions of "Truth and Peace." Not the church parsons of Virginia, but the Wallers and Webbers and Irelands, who from jail windows proclaimed universal toleration and good-will, gave direction and tone to the charitable sentiments now so popular and amiable in all the churches. As a religious denomination, the Baptists have been the most liberal and catholic in the world.

They have contended for the liberties of Romanists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Quakers, Jews, Turks, and Pagans, as earnestly as for their own.

And yet, forsooth, in these modern days, it has been discovered and proclaimed, that Baptists are an illiberal, exclusive, narrow sect! The Baptists exclusive! when the foundation principle of their whole church polity is the essentiality of voluntary choice to right membership in the church of Christ? Exclusive! when every chapter in our history furnishes a brilliant record of struggles for soul liberty, in which all others equally with ourselves should be sharers? Exclusive! when we never struck a blow at the shackles that galled our own limbs, that did not fall with equal force upon the fetters that bound others? Exclusive! then the sunshine and the showers, that fall impartially upon all alike, are exclusive.

II. IN THEIR SOCIAL RELATIONS AND QUALITIES, I have never observed that the Baptists exhibit any peculiar exclusiveness or moroseness.

They seem to me, in these respects, equal to the average of humanity.

In our cities and towns, and in some rural districts too, we often find cliques and coteries. Various affinities draw parties together in social sets. Family, blood, culture, fashion, church, are centres around which little parties segregate themselves. Outsiders may complain of these cliques ; some who would like to belong to them, or be recognized by them, may murmur and sneer. It is often a relief to grumble. I have no theory for reforming or reconstructing society in these respects. I leave philosophising about it to the social reformers.

But it is pertinent to ask : Are Baptists peculiarly chargeable with this social exclusiveness ? The question answers itself. Their illiberalism does not take that direction.

Suppose I should ask you to judge from ordinary observation, which of the religious denominations are most repellant of others in social intercourse, which knit themselves most closely together in clanship, which most obvi-

ously separate themselves into little "touch me not" coteries, forming "our set," "moving in a different sphere;" well, I am sure you would not answer, "The Baptists." "Oh, no!" I have often heard the sneer, "*they* are not in the higher classes. They are, in the main, composed of common people."

Well, there is a comfort in calling to mind that the "common people heard Jesus gladly," and that he (blessed be his name!) and his apostles and primitive disciples, all belonged, not to the higher classes—the aristocracy of Pharisees and nobles—but to the lower mass, such as carpenters and fishermen, tax-gatherers and publicans, "the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." You may say this of us, but you cannot then add, "and these people, too, are social exclusives. These plebeians arrogate social superiority over the patricians, and the patricians are grieved about it. This rude democracy is hurting the feelings of the refined aristocracy by declining proffered fraternity and fellowship." This would be a marvellous rever-

sal of the order of society in this world of ours. We modestly claim that in all ordinary intercourse, our people are as hospitable and generous, as easy of approach, as cheerful in neighborly charities, as prompt in kindly responses to all proffers of good-fellowship, as the average of mankind.

Bear with me while I utter a few serious words more on this topic. As I conceive, it is neither good philosophy, patriotism, nor piety, for the cultivated and rich to separate themselves from association with the humbler classes, especially in church relations. Their advantages involve duties toward those less favored, which cannot be met by isolating themselves in dissevered communions. The educated and wealthy have no moral right to withdraw themselves from the ignorant and poor, into their class churches, and to consult mere taste and social affinities instead of conscience and benevolence. Instead of shunning the rude and the lowly, in religious association, the true-hearted Christian will rather seek to link himself in fellowship with the humble poor,

come nearer to them that he may do them good, and aid in their elevation and purity with his influence and culture and means. As Jesus himself preferred to come into closest affiliation with the poor and ignorant, in order to reach and raise them, so should all his true followers seek to do. Those disciples who piously aim to imitate this sublime example are most blessed of heaven, and most useful to men. Your class churches, in which wealth and fashion and taste, and parvenue travesties of them, withdraw from common humanity, are far from the model which Jesus gave, and after which the apostles patterned. These, if any on earth, are your real close communion churches. When Baptist churches cherish such exclusiveness, may they be obliterated, and more Christ-like communities be raised up in their places.

III. It can hardly be fairly objected to us, that we are exclusive and narrow in our plans and endeavors to **EDUCATE AND ELEVATE THE PEOPLE.**

It is true we have our own schools and colleges,

but so have all other sects; and the doors of ours are as widely open as any. There is as little sectarian restriction and teaching in them as in any, and that, I think, is stating the case very moderately. We are trying to take a generous share in this great common work.

Our children are educated in the schools of other sects more numerous, I think, than their children in ours. We have some reason to complain of our own people for too large a liberality in this matter. Our own schools suffer from it. Not a few of our ministers have been trained in Presbyterian colleges and theological schools. Rarely does a class pass from the halls of Princeton without numbering Baptists among its graduates. Few are the colleges and universities in the land which do not number our children in their classes. Should one reply, "That is because these institutions are regarded as the best," then our answer would be, if admitting it: "Is it not a proof of a catholic and liberal spirit to choose the best, regardless of sectarian proclivities?" Our state universities, supposed to be without

sectarian bias, have a large share of representatives from Baptist churches, except in the departments of instruction and control.

Is this generous spirit equally reciprocated? Allow me just to state a few facts illustrating this point.

In 1720, Thomas Hollis of London, a Baptist—whom Backus calls “one of the most liberal men on earth”—endowed a professorship of theology in Harvard College, then a strictly sectarian Congregational institution. This gift has ever since yielded eighty pounds sterling a year. No Baptist ever filled that chair. A Unitarian holds it now. Hollis also endowed ten scholarships, each yielding one hundred dollars per annum, and only providing that four of them should be appropriated to Baptist students, if such applied. Where are the professorships and scholarships in our institutions endowed by Christians of other churches? Six years after, in 1726, he endowed another professorship—that of mathematics and experimental philosophy—with a salary of four hundred dollars a year. He gave an apparatus

costing one hundred and fifty pounds sterling, and large additions to the college library. He was the most munificent benefactor of the college in his day; and all this was done, while the ecclesiastical authorities controlling the college were fining, whipping, imprisoning, and banishing the Baptists, and nailing up the doors of their churches. Does the world furnish an illustration of liberality toward us that will compare with this? Two years after this last generous donation, by the very people who accepted it, twenty-eight Baptists, two Episcopalians, and two Quakers were imprisoned in Bristol jail for failing to pay taxes for the support of Congregational ministers.

Take another illustration. In 1828, Ebenezer Lane, a Baptist, gave four thousand dollars as a foundation for a theological seminary in Cincinnati, which yet bears his name—the Lane Seminary—and he gave it to the Presbyterians. Where is the Baptist institution that bears the name of a Presbyterian founder? Later still, in 1870, Judge Fletcher of Boston, a Baptist, be-

queathed one hundred thousand dollars to Dartmouth College, a Congregational institution. When may we expect one hundred thousand, or a single thousand dollars, from a member of any other church for one of our institutions, even as a memorial of the noble men who won religious freedom for all sects?

With such facts gemming the pages of our history, is it generous or just to stigmatize us as an illiberal and exclusive sect, without broad sympathies or a catholic spirit? Such charges have been so persistently repeated that some people without investigation have come to believe that there must be some truth in them. I am sure that good men will be glad to learn that there are no fair reasons for such a prejudice.

IV. In those wider charities that stretch away from self and home, and, like God's love for a world so distant as this from his heaven, seek to instruct and save the ignorant and guilty who can never make any returns—in the grand MISSIONARY EVANGELISM of the church, have Baptists been narrow and selfish?

Leading the grand movement of modern missions, the first society for evangelizing the heathen was organized by Baptists, in 1793. The pioneer missionary was William Carey. Among the leaders of American missions, were Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice. The first translations of the Bible into heathen tongues were made by Baptists. They have published God's book, in native languages, to more than two-thirds of the population of the globe. The first Bible Society for distributing the Holy Scriptures was planned, nourished into vigorous life, and made successful and efficient by the energies of Wm. Hughes, a Baptist. The first Christian churches organized of heathen converts in India, Burmah, China, Siam, were Baptist churches.

We would detract nothing from the honor due to other churches for the generous part they have taken in these noble enterprises. With larger wealth, and more concentrated organization, they have often done more than we have in contributing to the efficiency of these great movements. But it will not be denied that into

these broad fields of Christian enterprise, the Baptists were leaders.

In all the general societies, too, in which Christians of different denominations have combined to promote a common work—as in Bible, Tract, Sunday School, Temperance, and other Societies, our people have been interested workers. From what common charities have we withheld our co-operation? We do not deny that there has been a class of Baptists, known as “Anti-Missionary, or Old School,” who have refused co-operation in these charities. But their numbers were always small, and their leaders without influence in the councils of the denomination, and the great body have pressed onward uninfluenced by their antagonism.

If we have our own denominational societies for various kinds of Christian work, so have all other sects. It is perhaps best for the general good that it should be so. But it seems scarcely fair, that our brethren from behind their own party hedges should taunt us for not marching all our forces out upon the broad common.

So far, then, I think that all unbiased minds will admit that Baptists, as a whole, are about as liberal and catholic as any other people.

I hear that murmur! "Al! this is very well, very good points to make but, after all, there is your CLOSE COMMUNION."

Is that all? Do all the objections to us, as churches, virtually centre in this? Let us, then, examine a little this phantom that scares so many people, ycleped

CLOSE COMMUNION.

I deny this charge, too. I, for one, am *no* close communionist. I repudiate the phrase, and the idea which it ordinarily conveys.

WHAT IS COMMUNION?

The lexicons say Communion is "fellowship; intercourse between two or more persons; interchange of transactions and offices; agreement; concord." In a religious sense, the philologists define it: "Mutual intercourse or union in religious worship, or in doctrines, or in discipline."

(Webster.) In distinguishing it from "conversation," Crabbe says, "Communion may take place without corporeal agency ; conversation never does." The Greek word *κοινωνία*, which we sometimes translate communion, occurs in just twenty different places in the New Testament ; in twelve, translated "fellowship ;" in one, "distribution ;" in one, "contribution ;" in four, "communion ;" and in only two of all, and both in the same passage, is it used with any reference to the Lord's Supper.

The word Communion, in its proper signification in New Testament usage, is equivalent to agreement, fellowship. So far as I agree with another, I commune with him in the expression of that agreement. As Christians, so far as we believe the same truths, experience like emotions, and cooperate in common charities, we do commune together. When I join voice and heart with a brother in a hymn of praise to God, or in a prayer, in which our spirits are in unison, I am in communion with him. When I listen to a sermon, and believe, and love, and am edified

and refreshed by its truths, my spirit is in communion with the spirit of the preacher.

If I join with any brother in any work of charity, ministering to the sick or the sorrowing, the poor or the ignorant, in which both our hearts are interested, I am in communion with him.

This is Christian communion— agreement in faith, in feeling, and in labor; mutual participation in the same duties, emotions, and experiences. And so far as this agreement goes, does the communion extend. Further it cannot go. Where we do not agree it is impossible to commune. There can no more be communion in differences, than agreement in disagreements, or harmony in discords. Communion in differences is a contradiction of terms. Any forms or expressions of communion where there is not union in sentiment and affection, are, whether consciously or not, hollow and hypocritical.

I can commune with a Quaker, a Unitarian, or an Atheist, so far as we agree, but no farther. I commune more closely with a devout Presbyterian, Methodist, or Episcopalian, because we hold more truths, and more important truths, in

common. We walk further together on a common platform. But just where the disagreement begins the communion ends; not because he wishes, or I wish it to end, but necessarily, because there is a point upon which we no longer think or feel alike. We may love each other tenderly, have faith in the conscientious honesty of each other's convictions, but communion, that is, agreement, in differences, is simply an absurd impossibility.

This, then, is Christian communion—to believe alike, feel alike, work alike, and in harmony with each other.

Now, in this broad, true, literal meaning of the word Communion, *are* Baptists close communionists? I deny it emphatically. We do hold communion with all Christians just so far as we have common faith, experience, worship, and duty. So far as these go, Baptists have always sought a common participation and fellowship.

And when my heart is linked to your heart in all pious experiences, and my hand is joined in your hand in all godly activities; when I go with you to the full length of our mutual agree-

ment, will you reproach me with close communion? Will you first put an unauthorized, technical, narrow meaning into the word communion, and then apply it invidiously to me? You are uncharitable and unjust to me in uttering such reproach. Could you say to me, "I will commune with you in what I deem your errors and faults?" You would be untrue to yourself and your faith to say so. You could not do it if you tried. We do not ask it of you.

We sincerely say, then, let us walk together in sweet communion of spirit and labor, so far as we are agreed, and beyond that let there be mutual forbearance and charity. We shall not win each other into closer mutual communion by harsh epithets and words of strife.

Up to this point, then, will you not admit that we are not deserving of any peculiar censure? In our ordinary intercourse with Christian people of all names, are we not about as kind and frank and hearty as any? In all interchanges of Christian courtesy; in pious counsels, and labors, and worship; in boards, committees, and

trusteeships; in Christian Associations and benevolent societies; in conversing, singing, praying, worshipping, and toiling together; in fraternal and ministerial recognitions and exchanges; in all common objects in regard to which there is a common agreement, is there any peculiar closeness or exclusiveness among Baptists? Do those denominations holding what they are pleased to term open communion, mingle and cooperate more freely and lovingly with each other than Baptists do with all? I might push these questions farther, but I forbear.

But some of you may be thinking the *main* objection is not *yet* touched. It is this. You will not invite us, for whom you profess such communion, to participate with you in the LORD'S SUPPER. Here, then, we have the charge narrowed down to a single topic. There seems absolutely nothing else in regard to which Baptists exhibit any especial closeness. We ask, we claim this admission, that, in all other respects save this *one*, Baptists are as liberal, amicable, charitable, and catholic as any other people.

“You refuse us recognition and fellowship by declining to partake with us the Supper of the Lord.” This is the single serious objection to our principles and practices. Is it not?

My first answer to this is, that the Lord's Supper was not instituted or intended to express the fellowship or love of Christians for one another. In any controversy it is very important rightly to define the words that are employed. *Do* Christians come to the Lord's table to *commune* with each other? Is taking the Lord's Supper a communion of the saints? Is this a ceremony intended to express, as Christians, mutual remembrance, fellowship, and affection for one another? Emphatically, No! The notion that Christians go to the Lord's table for such purpose, is a bald fallacy. It has no warrant in God's word, nor in the spiritual intent and experience of the Lord's disciples. The Lord's Supper is not, according to its institution or nature, an ordinance expressive of mutual communion or fellowship.

When Jesus instituted this ordinance, he ut

tered not one word indicating that he meant it as a test of mutual fellowship, or an observance in which Christians might show their love for one another. He said, "This do in remembrance"—not of each other—but "of me." "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth"—*what?* Communion with one another? No, verily!—"the Lord's death." To his disciples "the Lord was made known in the breaking of bread." After they were baptized, we are told, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Here the breaking of bread was not the fellowship, but something distinguished from it as clearly as the doctrine and the prayers. The fellowship is one thing; the breaking of bread is another and different thing. "The cup which we bless, is it not the communion of"—*what?* Of Christians with one another? No—"the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" This is the only passage in which the word communion occurs at all in con

nection with the Lord's Supper. Communion of the blood and body of Christ is communion with Christ in the sufferings and death of which the cup and the loaf are the expressive symbols.

This, then, is the design of the Lord's Supper, "to show his death"—"to do this in remembrance of him."

And that this is its purpose the *experience* of all spiritually minded Christians corroborates. When you piously partake of the Lord's Supper is your brother in your thought and heart, or is your Lord? Are you meditating on *their* excellences, or on *his* sufferings? Is it esteem for them, or love for him that you cherish? If the heart is in harmony with the solemn service, it is full of Christ, not of Christians. We forget, or strive to forget, feel it duty to forget, the dearest friend of earth, though sitting beside us, and concentrate our thoughts and love on Jesus. Should a brother lean toward you to assure you of his love and fellowship while the bread was in your hand, or the cup at your lip, you would shrink from him as expressing a sentiment utterly out

of place and season. You are abstracting yourself from all earthly relations and friendships and loves, and concentrating thought and feeling and memory upon Jesus and his sufferings and death for you. You do not come to that table to commune with your brother, but to commune with your Redeemer alone. "This do in remembrance of me." "Ye do show the Lord's death."

Is this view of the essential design of the Lord's Supper and of Christian experience in partaking of it true? Then it follows, that if I wish to commune with a Christian, I must go away from the Lord's table to do it. I do not show my love or my fellowship for him there. That is not the place for interchanges of mutual affection. If any disciple, then, asks me to commune with him, I answer, certainly; we will pray together, praise together, talk of the Lord's goodness and grace, rehearse our experiences of his mercy and love, and labor together in all measures to edify Christians and to win souls to Jesus. This is communion!

Are Baptists then close communionists? What

other Christians are more ready than they thus to commune with their brethren?

If that disciple says to me further, "Let us express our communion with one another by sitting together at the supper of the Lord," I will answer, "My brother, to that table I go to commune with my Saviour, not with you or any mortal man or holy angel. If you go there in a right spirit you will forget me, as I shall certainly strive to forget you. There our thoughts and hearts are to be so full of Christ as to leave no room for memories of one another. I have nothing to do with man at the table of the Lord. My intercourse and fellowship there are solely with Jesus."

Does not this view prove, then, that Christian communion and fellowship does not at all depend upon mutual participation of the Lord's Supper? There is Christian communion without it; and there is strictly nothing of what is popularly called communion in it. Whatever is essential to the communion of the saints is to be sought for elsewhere than at the supper of the

Lord, and if not found elsewhere, will not be found there.

Now, I may be asked, "If then there is no Christian intercommunion in a mutual participation of the Lord's Supper, why not invite us to partake with you?"

I answer, We have no right to change the terms or conditions which our Lord has established in relation to this ordinance. We decline to legislate for Christ's church. If he requires that his disciples shall first be baptized, and thus be initiated into his church, and *then* partake of the supper, we are not warranted in changing or consenting to a change of this order.

Certainly *some* qualifications or conditions are prerequisite to a right approach to the Lord's Supper. Surely it is not a feast to be thrown open indiscriminately to all comers. Ministers may not fling out invitations to this solemn festival as freely as merrymakers to a picnic, or politicians to a barbecue. Christian liberality does not require this; Christian reverence and integrity do not permit us to go thus far.

This is a subject in regard to which we are to inquire, not what is popular or expedient, but simply and only what is the law of Christ? What does Jesus, our only lawgiver, require as qualifications and conditions? Ten thousand sophistries are swept away by simple adherence to a sound principle. If we are close, it is only because we wish to be close to Christ's commands. We will strain after no liberty or liberality beyond the bounds which our Master and Redeemer has fixed.

What, then, according to the gospel, ought the Christian to be and to do in order to come rightly to the supper of the Lord?

I answer: first, converted; second, baptized.

Our Lord's final and definite instructions to his apostles, and through them to his church in all ages, are these: "Go ye therefore and teach (disciple) all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This commission involves the whole method of Christian

organization and order. The plain order, then, is for the minister, first, to disciple—that is, so to present the claims and motives of the gospel as to win souls to Christ; for thus only can they be disciplined—second, to baptize those thus taught or disciplined; third, to instruct them to observe whatsoever Christ has commanded. The order for those addressed by Christ's ministers is: first, to become disciples; second, to be baptized; third, to observe whatsoever Christ has commanded. Is it possible to convey in human language instructions plainer than these?

Now, where in this distinct line of sequences comes in the Lord's Supper? Before the discipleship? Before baptism? Who dare thus interchange the order which Jesus has prescribed, and affirm that the baptism may come before the discipleship, or the Lord's Supper before the baptism? Who will venture to use his shallow wisdom to amend the order which our Lord has appointed?

We find further that this divinely instituted order was strictly observed by the apostles.

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Their practice, guided by inspiration, is a commentary upon this commission of the Lord.

Upon the day of Pentecost they, first, taught, or disciplined, the people; second, they baptized them; third, the baptized "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread (the Lord's Supper), and in prayer." Philip preached in Samaria. The people first believed, were disciplined; second, were baptized; afterward the supper of the Lord. There is no instance given in the New Testament intimating that any unbaptized disciple ever took into his hands or lips the bread and wine of this ordinance. All the examples adduced or alluded to show that those who partook of the supper of the Lord were the converted and baptized. The practice of the apostles and primitive disciples agrees with the commission of Christ.

It must from the necessities of the case be so. Baptism is made, by the law of the Lord, the ordinance or ceremony which initiates the disciple into the church, or congregation of believers. The Lord's Supper is administered within the

church to the congregation of believers. The initiatory rite, as a matter of course, necessarily precedes the rights and privileges of membership in the body. Permit me to illustrate this principle. A foreigner cannot become a citizen in this country without a formal oath of allegiance. He may have all the moral and intellectual qualifications that are necessary to citizenship. He may be better fitted to enjoy the privileges and perform the duties of citizenship than many recognized citizens, but the privileges peculiar to the citizen he cannot enjoy till he has taken that oath of allegiance prescribed by the statute. Nor can he come in by any other oath than that.

Now, by the law of the Lord, baptism stands in relation to his organized kingdom as the oath of allegiance stands in relation to citizenship to the civil government. You cannot come into Christ's church except by baptism. You cannot become a member of any society without submitting to the prescribed initiatory ceremony or condition, and you cannot claim any of the privileges peculiar to membership in the society

until you thus become a member of it. So plainly is this order the teaching of the Scriptures in relation to the church ; so obvious is it in the very nature of the case, that the articles and canons of all Christian sects in all ages teach or take for granted, that whoever comes rightly to the table of the Lord has been previously baptized. Until a comparatively recent date this position has never been questioned. And it is worthy of remark in passing, that the theory which denies that baptism is a necessary prerequisite to the Lord's Supper originated with Baptists. John Bunyan's "Water Baptism no bar to Communion" is the first treatise I have ever heard of on that side of the question. At a later date Robert Hall and Baptist Noel and others have taken this ground.

Will you ponder this fact as it bears on the charge of Baptist intolerance, narrowness, and exclusiveness? Here has been a struggle in the hearts of Baptists to work out some method by which to break down the barriers that separate the denominations. The great heart of John Bun-

yan, uncramped by his thirteen years of imprisonment in Bedford jail, beat so lovingly for all the disciples of Jesus that he even strained the truth itself to get into closer union with them. And Hall and Noel and others seemed restless even under the appearance of division. They dared not give up their views of baptism. To them it was immersion and nothing else. But they said, "We think we may sit with you at the Lord's table though you have not been baptized." They tried to make even the word of God bend to their desire for a closer, an ecclesiastical as well as a moral, union with Christians of other names. Does this look like intolerance and exclusiveness? Where has a spirit like this been reciprocated? For example, most of our brethren hold that immersion and sprinkling are equally baptism. They could, therefore, give up sprinkling without sacrificing conscience or truth. We could all then unite upon "one baptism." A spirit of liberality, of solicitude for church union, anything like that manifested by Bunyan and Hall, would prompt brethren who long for union to say,

“As *we* do acknowledge immersion to be a true baptism, and as you cannot conscientiously recognize the validity of sprinkling, we will adopt the one mode upon which we can all agree, and in this respect at least we shall be one.” This would be coming a little part of the way to meet the advances of the Baptists.

A few years since a bishop of the Episcopal Church did publicly propose a compromise with the Baptists somewhat of this sort, urging the restoration of the primitive immersion into the Episcopal Church of this country from the clergy of the Greek Church. But his brethren would not listen to this wise and truthful counsel, and chose to perpetuate what that bishop called an irregular baptism, but what we conscientiously believe to be no baptism at all.

Now we ask in all candor, if the liberal, the catholic position on these points has not been taken and held by Baptists? A charitable response to the loving spirit of such men as Bunyan and Hall would have effected this union ages ago. I adduce these considerations that

you may judge upon which side of this controversy there is, after all that has been said, the largest liberality and charity.

To return to the directer line of argument. I have shown the clear teaching of the New Testament, and it is the received doctrine of all the creeds of Christendom, that baptism goes before the Lord's Supper, that every Christian should be baptized before coming to the Lord's table.

Within fifty years of the last apostle's death, Justin Martyr said, speaking of the Lord's Supper, "of which it is not lawful for any to partake but such as believe the things taught by us to be true, and have been baptized." Dr. Wall, the learned Episcopalian historian, who profoundly investigated this whole subject, declares, "No church ever gave the communion to any persons before they were baptized. Among all the absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained *that*, that any person should partake of the communion before he was baptized."

We thus prove our position, that conversion and baptism must precede the Lord's Supper:

1. From the explicit commission of our Lord.
2. From the practice of the apostolic churches.
3. From the very nature of the relation of baptism to membership, and of membership to the Lord's Supper.
4. From the universal practice, and from the creeds of all churches in all ages.

Here then we stand on one common platform as interpreted by their confessions, with all Christian sects. We would go far to secure ecclesiastical union with all who love Christ, but we cannot disregard a law of Jesus. That law is, conversion before baptism, baptism before the Lord's Supper.

The single point upon which we are close, the single question by which the issue is to be decided is—What is baptism? We do hold that an immersion, a burial in water, is essential to baptism, and that those who have not been buried in baptism have not been baptized. It is thus a close baptism that we hold, not a close communion. With strict uncompromising convictions as to what constitutes baptism, we are

willing to be charged ; we will not shrink from that reproach ; we will rather glory in it ; but we insist that it is unfair and invidious to stigmatize us as close communionists when the principles we hold on this subject are common to all denominations.

The whole and sole question, then, between us and other evangelical churches, so far as the ordinances are concerned, is this—What is baptism ? This question I do not of course propose to discuss now. We are convinced that when Jesus commanded us to be baptized he meant that we should be immersed in water, and that nothing else than this is baptism at all. To us our brethren of other churches are beloved Christians, but they are unbaptized Christians, and we hold that they ought to be baptized before coming to the Lord's table.

“ It is the Lord's table ! ” Yes ! And therefore the invitations to it are to be governed by the Lord's instructions. To our own tables we may invite whom we will. But servants may not give out invitations to their Master's table,

except according to their Master's instructions.

With a brief summary of arguments presented I conclude.

1. I have shown (I hope to your satisfaction and gratification) that in all social intercourse, benevolent co-operation, true Christian fellowship and communion, the Baptists, as a denomination, are not fairly chargeable with bigotry, exclusiveness, or narrowness; but are liberal, charitable, and catholic.

2. That the word communion, in scriptural usage, has a very broad application, but is not at all used to denote mutual fellowship at the Lord's table, and that to limit the word "communion" to the Lord's Supper, and then couple the word "close" with it, is an abuse of language, a fallacy unwarranted and invidious.

3. That the Lord's Supper is an ordinance in which we are to remember Jesus, show forth his death, and commune with him; and that it was never designed to express Christian intercommunion and fellowship. It was never in-

tended to be a symbol of "the communion of the saints."

4. That the Lord's Supper, being a positive or statutory institution of Christ, is to be observed according to the order which he has prescribed, and which the apostles practised; and that this order plainly is, first, Discipleship, second, Baptism, third, Breaking of bread.

5. That we are to deem nothing unimportant or unessential which Jesus commands. If he has placed the baptistery in front of the table, we have no right to build a bridge over it, or to pass round it with dry feet.

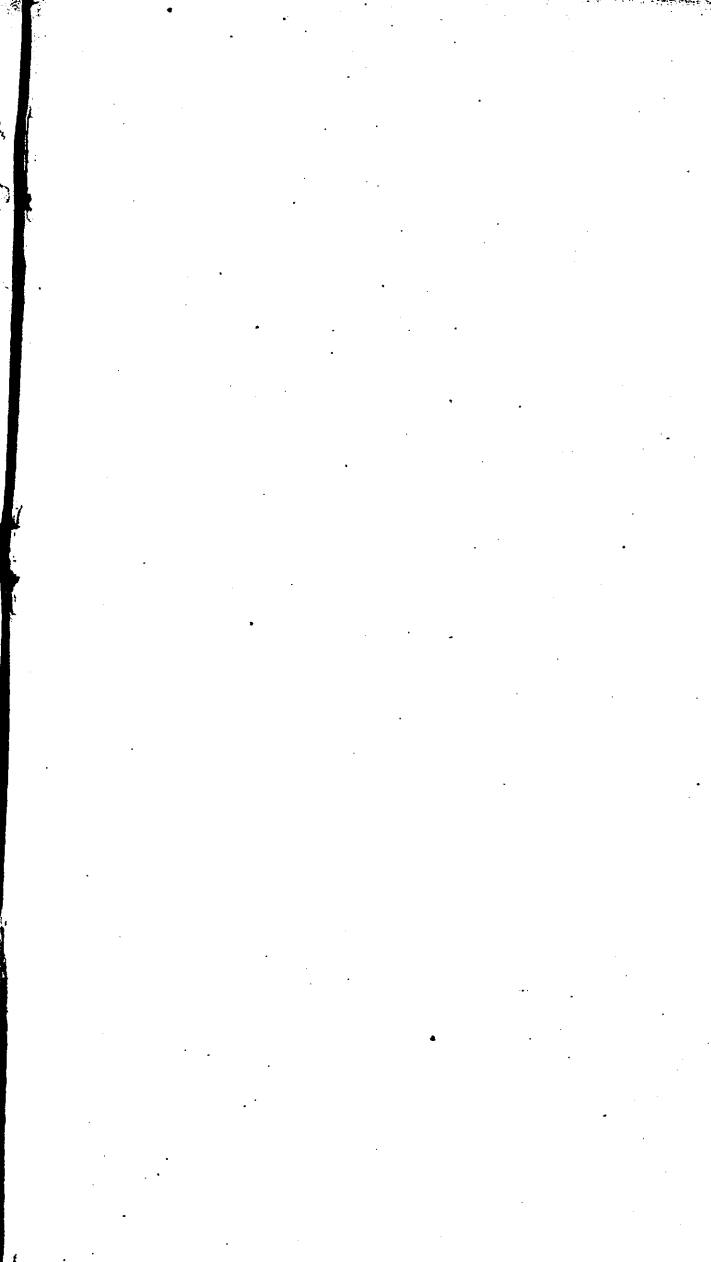
6. That the servants of Christ have no right to consult their own preferences or affections instead of their Master's instructions, in issuing invitations to his table. The guests there are to be only such as he describes and invites.

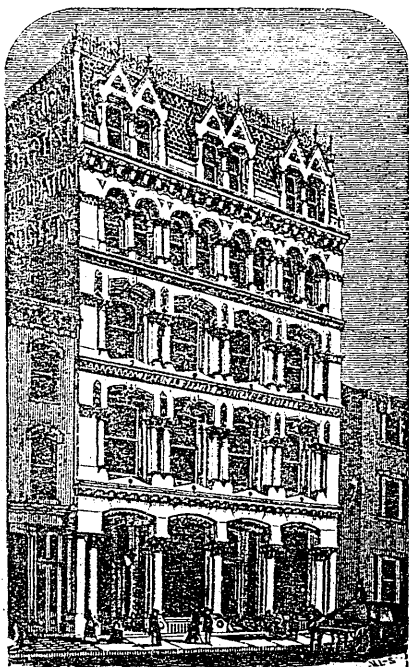
We will go as far to promote Christian union and to express Christian fellowship with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, as any Christian people will go—as far as truth and conscience will permit. We will strive to take

—what dear brethren we exhort you all to take —the revealed word of God as the only law for Christians. There can be no true union except upon that platform. So far as we adopt its teachings and practise them, we *are* one. Whoever diverges from these is responsible just so far for disunion from those who conscientiously cling to them. The sheep that stray from the enclosed fold of the Good Shepherd, or who refuse to enter by the door, are the separatists, not those who enter and remain in that fold.

“Other sheep” Jesus may have who “are not of this fold,” but he will bring them, and there shall ultimately “be one fold and one Shepherd.” Christians will be more closely united when they come, as they will come, to apprehend that “there is one body, one spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in you all.”

THE END.





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